

OCT 14 1977

CIA opens doors to D.C. reporters

By Gordon Elliot White
Deseret News Washington
correspondent

McLEAN, Va. — Lights burned into the night at Central Intelligence Agency headquarters here Thursday night, but it signalled no international crisis. It was, of all things, a reception for about 100 reporters and Capitol Hill press aides.

For the first time in its 30-year history, the CIA invited the press for a briefing and refreshments. The agency even distributed an information kit of background material, maps, charts and a photo of CIA director Stansfield Turner.

The effort was part of the agency's new as-open-as-possible door policy, subtitled "making the CIA less mysterious."

The effort was probably a success in dispelling some of the mystery and making the agency more familiar and less of a bogey-man to Washington reporters. The event was the first meeting of the fall for Sigma Delta Chi, professional journalism society.

The reporters got a chance to see Paul M. Chretien, a man whose chief duty for many years has been to answer a special unlisted, but well-known telephone number and say "The CIA can neither confirm nor deny what you say."

They also saw Herbert E. Hetu, a former Navy public information officer whose last duty was to head the Bicentennial Commission's press office. Hetu is now in charge of a 14-person CIA press office, and he is trying to confirm or deny as much as he can without giving up real secrets.

Despite such touches as holding its reception in something called the "RENDEZVOUS Room," the CIA clearly remains a proud agency whose patron saints are establishment intellectuals

such as Gen. William Donovan, head of the World War II or SIS, and Allen Dulles, President Eisenhower's CIA director.

Chretien, who has been the agency's senior briefer for several years, made it clear that the CIA holds its head high, despite a clutch of Watergate and post-Watergate revelations. He described the CIA as the agency that cut Howard Hunt off from technical support demanded by the White House when the agency began to suspect that Hunt was doing domestic operations. He said the CIA refused to pay hush-money to the White House plumbers and refused to block an FBI investigation of money laundered in Mexico.

It was the CIA that Richard Nixon was trying to frame in the White House tape that brought him down, Chretien added proudly.

The CIA headquarters here is in a modern building that sprawls over several hundred acres of Virginia countryside just outside Washington. For years it was marked by a sign reading "Bureau of Public Roads" that fooled no one.

The central headquarters structure is an attractive building, in the style of the newer U.S. embassies. It particularly resembles the U.S. Embassy in London, with an atrium courtyard sur-

rounded by modern marble cloister-like corridors.

In the main hall 36 stars are chiseled into the wall under an inscription in memory of agency employes who gave their lives in cold war skirmishes.

Chretien disclosed no secrets in his briefing or in questioning afterwards, but he showed one agency gimmick, disappearing paper that can be eaten or dissolved in water. He gave a chalk-talk on the classic method of recruiting an agent, using phosphorescent colored chalk that glowed under the rays of an ultraviolet light.

Nothing the reporters heard would surprise a James Bond fan; in fact, Chretien was at pains to explain that very little the agency does nowadays is very James-Bondish.

But he noted later, women are still one of the chief tools in agent recruiting by the Soviet KGB and by the West. He recalled several Soviet defectors who came over to the West because they fell in love.

"In some of these cases their wives were being held as hostages in Russia," he noted, "and that was just what the defectors wanted."

The U.S. does not use American journalists or churchmen as "cover" for intelligence officers or agents, and has not done so since Jan. 1, 1977, Hetu said.